

Remarks

Claims 1-7, 10-17, 19-21, 23-25 and 27-32 are pending in the application. Claims 1-7, 10-17, 19-21, 23-25 and 27-32 are rejected. Amendments to the application are shown above. The Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of the application in view of the amendments and the following remarks.

REJECTIONS UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1-3, 6-7, 10-12, and 30-32 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ortega (U.S. 6,564,213) in view of Gross (U.S. 2004/0143564) in view of Valk (U.S. 2003/0182463). Claims 13-15, 17 and 19-20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ortega in view of Gross. Claims 21, 23-25 and 27-28 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ortega in view of Gross in view of Van Vleet (U.S. 2006/0112178). Claim 4 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ortega in view of Gross in view of Valk in view of Bowman (U.S. 6,006,225). Claim 5 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ortega in view of Gross in view of Valk in view of Van Vleet. Claim 16 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ortega in view of Gross in view of Bowman. Claim 29 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ortega in view of Gross in view of Van Vleet in view of Chan (U.S. 2006/0129915).

Claim 1 as presently amended expressly recites (emphasis added):

A method of incrementally refining queries and updating query results without requiring a user to provide an explicit indicator of query submission, comprising:

defining one or more query related character patterns that do not include an explicit indicator of query submission;

monitoring entry of query defining characters by a user to detect entry of a defined query related character pattern;

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providing the user with one or more suggested query refinement options each time a defined query related character pattern is detected without requiring the user to provide the explicit indicator of query submission, wherein the one or more suggested query refinement options includes at least one of a synonym suggestion for the detected defined query related character pattern or a broadening suggestion for the detected defined query related character pattern; and

providing the user with an updated query result each time a defined query related character pattern is detected without requiring the user to provide the explicit indicator of query submission.

No new matter has been added to claim 1; the Examiner's attention is directed to at least Figures 8A-8B and page 9, line 22, to page 10, line 20, of the Applicant's specification as originally filed.

On page 3 of the instant Office Action, the Examiner asserts that Ortega discloses "providing the user with one or more suggested query refinement options" as claimed by the Applicant. The Applicant submits, however, that Ortega fails to disclose or suggest "*wherein the one or more suggested query refinement options includes at least one of a synonym suggestion for the detected defined query related character pattern or a broadening suggestion for the detected defined query related character pattern*" as expressly recited by the Applicant in presently amended claim 1.

Ortega is directed to search query autocompletion. Ortega discloses displaying suggested autocompletion strings in a dropdown box 62 (Figures 2A and 2B; col. 5, lines 25-30). The autocompletion strings are generated from a lookup in an autocompletion string trie (Figure 3; col. 6, lines 1-17). The trie is used to find autocompletion strings that include the user's originally entered query string and additional strings. For example, in Figure 2B, the user entered "SONY" and all the

autocompletion strings include "SONY" in addition to other strings such as "VCR", "TV", etc. However, Ortega fails to disclose or suggest *"wherein the one or more suggested query refinement options includes at least one of a synonym suggestion for the detected defined query related character pattern or a broadening suggestion for the detected defined query related character pattern"* as expressly claimed by the Applicant.

Additionally, the Applicant submits that references Gross and Valk cited against claim 1 also fail to disclose or suggest *"wherein the one or more suggested query refinement options includes at least one of a synonym suggestion for the detected defined query related character pattern or a broadening suggestion for the detected defined query related character pattern"* as expressly claimed by the Applicant.

Thus, the cited references, whether taken singularly or in combination, fail to disclose at least one of the expressly recited limitations of claim 1. Accordingly, claim 1 is not rendered obvious by the cited references. Independent claims 13, 21, 25 and 30 distinguish from the cited references for at least the same reasons as claim 1. Claims 2-7, 10-12, 14-17, 19-20, 23-24, 27-29, and 31-32 are dependent claims and distinguish for at least the same reasons as their independent base claims in addition to adding further limitations of their own. Therefore, the Applicant respectfully requests that the instant § 103 rejections be withdrawn.

NEW CLAIMS 33-37

New claims 33-37 have been added. No new matter has been added; the Examiner's attention is directed to at least Figures 8A-8B and page 10, lines 8-20, of the Applicant's specification as originally filed. The Applicant submits that new claims

33-37 are allowable based on their dependency from allowable independent base claims.

CONCLUSION

Accordingly, in view of the above, it is submitted that all rejections and/or objections to the application have been overcome. Based on the foregoing, Applicant respectfully requests that the application be allowed, and that a timely Notice of Allowance be issued in this case. If the Examiner believes that the application is not in condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to call the Applicant's representative at the telephone number listed below.

PATENT

If this response is not considered timely filed and if a request for an extension of time is otherwise absent, Applicant hereby requests any necessary extension of time. If there is a fee occasioned by this response, including an extension of time fee that is not covered by an enclosed payment, please charge any deficiency to Deposit Account No. 50-0463. Any overpayment may be credited to the same account.

Respectfully submitted,
Microsoft Corporation

Date: August 10, 2007

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